

# **WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION**

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

**January 2002**

### *WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION*

#### **Russian River Flooding**

[Staff contact: Charles Reed]

After a brief but intense storm dumped approximately 3.2 inches of rain in Guerneville on January 1-2, 2002, the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) initiated flood preparation activities within the Russian River Community Sanitation District (RRCSD) to reduce storm-induced wastewater influent flows at the Guerneville treatment plant. Regional Water Board staff Charles Reed was invited by the SCWA to witness and evaluate its emergency response to localized flooding in the collection system and rising floodwaters in the Russian River.



(Flooding along Mark West Creek Corridor, Santa Rosa)

For the duration of the storm, the Guerneville treatment plant treated approximately 1.4 MGD of combined storm water/wastewater influent to a tertiary level but was unable to treat or store the total influent flow that peaked briefly at 4.0 MGD in the early morning of January 2, 2002.



(Flooding along Mark West Creek Corridor, Santa Rosa)

As a result, the RRCSD initiated a discharge of disinfected but incompletely treated wastewater at 1:00 p.m., that continued until the morning of January 3, 2002. This constituted a violation of provisions of the RRCSD's permit and staff are considering appropriate enforcement remedies.

#### **Rio Linda Adventist Academy Debris Removal**

[Staff contact: Paul Keiran]

On November 21, 2001 the Regional Water Board issued Cleanup and Abatement Order 2001-0202 to the Rio Lindo Adventist Academy in Healdsburg. The Order related to removal of 12,000 cubic yards of soil and concrete debris that had been dumped into the Russian River floodway, on Academy property, over the past six years. The Academy claimed that the debris dumping was in an effort to both reclaim land that had been swept away by flooding in 1995, and to protect drinking water wells located near the edge of the riverbank. The Order stated that placement of the soil constituted a serious threat to water quality within the lower Russian River basin.



(Rio Lindo Academy, Debris Removal along the Russian River, Healdsburg)

Removal activities began in early December 2001, only to be halted by a sustained series of precipitation events that continued through early January 2002. Activities commenced again on January 14, 2002, with full removal, and safe disposal on Academy property, completed by January 24, 2002. Permanent erosion controls were then placed across the exposed face of the removal area.



(Final Grade after Debris Removal, Rio Linda Academy, Russian River, Healdsburg)

### **Geysers Recharge Project**

[Staff contact: Paul Keiran]

All pipeline construction has been suspended for the winter with the six contracts expected to begin again in April 2002. Erosion control work will continue through the winter months. The project is still on scheduled for completion on December 31, 2002, given favorable weather conditions.

### **City of Healdsburg, Wastewater Treatment Plant**

[Staff contact: Mark Neely]

The City of Healdsburg (City) has hired a consultant, EDAW, Inc., to develop options for an upgrade to its wastewater treatment plant. The City failed to meet a Cleanup and Abatement Order time schedule that required it to cease the discharge of secondarily treated wastewater to an old gravel pit adjacent to the Russian River. The City instead proposed to relocate the discharge to another gravel pit the environmental effects of which are unacceptable to Regional Water Board staff. The City filed a lawsuit to prevent the Regional Water Board from enforcing the Order, to get the Court to determine that the environmental impact report on the relocation is legally adequate, and that the City could discharge to either gravel pit under its existing waste discharge requirements. The Superior Court ruled in the Regional Water Board's favor on a preliminary motion filed by the City. Subsequently, the Regional Water Board asked the Court to dismiss the case entirely. The Court will hold a hearing on that request on February 13, 2002.

### ***CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION***

#### **Investigation of Groundwater Pollution at Steele Lane and Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa**

[Staff contact: Mark Bartson]

Staff of the Santa Rosa Cleanups Unit is in the very early stages of an investigation into tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and MtBE contamination near the intersection of Steele Lane and Mendocino Avenue in Santa Rosa. The investigation has led to the discovery of PCE and MtBE in two irrigation wells at levels exceeding drinking water standards. One of these wells is a large irrigation well used to irrigate the Steele Lane Elementary School fields. The use of the school irrigation well has been discontinued as a result of this finding.

In addition, PCE has been discovered at levels below drinking water standards in two domestic drinking water wells approximately 2500 feet away from the initial area of concern. Regional Water Board staff and staff of the Sonoma County Environmental Health Department performed a door-to-door survey of approximately 350 homes in the area to advise residents of the problem and identify wells, especially those used for drinking water. Additional information will be forthcoming on this investigation.

## **Update on Groundwater Contamination at West College Avenue and Clover Drive, Santa Rosa**

[Staff contact: Mark Bartson]

The Santa Rosa Cleanups Unit continues to work on a variety of issues related to the West College Avenue/ Clover Drive PCE contamination problem. Staff is developing a work plan to investigate subsurface conditions and determine the extent of contamination and additional potential sources of contamination. Related to this, staff is currently reviewing a work plan submitted by the property owner at 1007 West College Avenue. This work is designed to investigate the extent of any release of PCE at this address. This release would be in addition to the previously documented release of PCE on a nearby property at 946 West College Avenue.

Staff will use the information gathered under the investigation described in the proposed work plan for 1007 West College Avenue to supplement the data gathered from the Regional Water Board's subsurface investigation being conducted with Cleanup and Abatement Account funds.

## **WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

### **Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List Update**

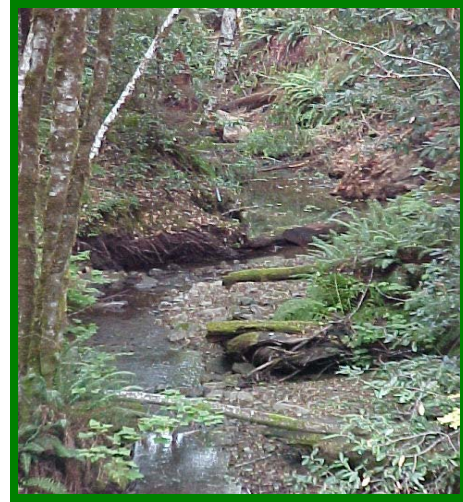
[Staff contact: David Leland]

The TMDL Development Unit presented a workshop on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List Update for 2002 on Wednesday, January 23, 2002. The workshop covered the listing process, the relationship of the list to TMDLs, guidance used in the listing process, the evaluation approach and evaluation criteria, evaluation of individual watershed data against the criteria, and staff's recommended additions to the list.

### **Update on Garcia River TMDL**

[Staff contact: Lisa Cinti]

On June 28, 2001 the Regional Board approved Resolution No. R1-2001-72 to incorporate the Garcia River Watershed Water Quality Attainment Action Plan for Sediment (Action Plan) into the Basin Plan. The Action Plan contains the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), the Monitoring Plan, and the Implementation Plan.



(South Fork Garcia River)

The Action Plan was adopted by the State Water Board on November 15, 2001, and then accepted by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on January 3, 2002. As of the date of OAL approval the Action Plan is in effect and enforceable. Landowners will be sent letters notifying them of the effective date of the new regulations. The Action Plan, however, is still pending final approval by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

## **The Basin Planning Unit**

[Staff contact: David Evans]

The Basin Planning Unit has redirected some assignments in order to begin work on Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans at the request of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Rebecca Fitzgerald will begin work in February on TMDL Implementation Plans for the Big River, Ten-Mile River, Albion River and the Noyo River. Jeff Church will assume the lead staff role, formerly held by Rebecca, working to establish water quality objectives for sediment in the Russian River drainage under our contract with the Sonoma County Water Agency.

Bernadette Reed is the Planning Unit's new lead staff for Proposition 13 projects. Gail Seymour who left Regional Water Board staff to take a position with the California Department of Fish and Game formerly filled this position. Proposition 13 Workshops were held on January 15, 2002, in Fortuna and on January 18, 2002, in Windsor. The deadline for submitting Proposition 13 grant applications was February 1, 2002.

## TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION

### Timber Harvest Division and TMDL Development

[Staff contact: Holly Lundborg]

The Regional Water Boards have recently received direction from the State Water Board that the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) is a top priority for this organization. To reflect this policy decision and as a means to improve water quality in two highly impacted streams in the North Coast Region, staff will develop two TMDLs in watersheds impaired by high sediment loads. Staff will begin the development of sediment TMDLs for the Elk River and Freshwater Creek watersheds, tributaries to Humboldt Bay in early 2002. The plans will begin with the scoping phase of the TMDL development in mid-March 2002, with a completion date for both TMDLs in July and August 2003.

### State Board of Forestry Hearing

[Staff contact: Christine Wright-Shacklett]

On February 6, 2002, Regional Water Board staff appeared at a State Board of Forestry hearing on the denial of Timber Harvest Plan (THP) 1-00-101 (MEN). Staff presented testimony as part of the Department of Forestry's presentation, along with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The testimony was offered in support of the Department of Forestry Director's decision not to approve the timber harvest plan proposed by Gualala Redwoods, Inc., on the 2-5 year flood plain of the North Fork and Little North Fork of the Gualala Rivers. The Director had denied the THP based on the NMFS finding that the proposed activity would result in a "taking" of listed anadromous salmonids (Coho and steelhead) in the affected river segments. Staff presented testimony relating to the proposed THP's potential for violation of the Regional Water Board's Basin Plan standards. The Board of Forestry denied the timber company's petition, upholding the Director's action and denying the THP.

## CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

There were three Cleanup and Abatement Orders issued during the month of January. The Orders were issued to The Salvation Army, Lytton Springs Facility, Sonoma County; Mr. Ken Bareilles, on or about THP 1-99-091, Mendocino County; and Former McNamara and Peepe Sawmill, Crescent City, Del Norte County. Below is a description of these Orders:

## Wastewater Treatment Pond, Salvation Army – Lytton Springs Facility

[Staff contact: Charles Reed]

On January 3, 2002, the Regional Water Board received an anonymous complaint through the Sonoma County Code Enforcement Division that a wastewater treatment pond at the Salvation Army-Lytton Springs Facility had breached its berm, releasing untreated domestic wastewater to Lytton Creek in Healdsburg. Regional Water Board staff were immediately dispatched to the site to assess the nature of the discharge. Staff confirmed the release of wastewater at a flow rate of approximately 10,000 gallons per day. In response, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer, Susan Warner, issued Cleanup and Abatement Order No. R1-2002-0017 on January 4, 2002, directing the Salvation Army to immediately cease the discharge of wastewater to surface waters and to commence actions to abate the threat of future discharges from the treatment pond. The breach was repaired by the evening of January 4, 2002, and the discharge to Lytton Creek was ceased. By January 9, 2002, all discharges of domestic waste from the facility to the treatment pond were being collected and transported to a municipal wastewater treatment facility by a contracted septic hauler. On January 30, 2002, the Salvation Army had completed disinfection of the contents of the wastewater treatment pond. The Salvation Army is currently finalizing a plan, subject to approval by the Executive Officer, to monitor the water quality of the treatment pond and to monitor surface waters in the event of future discharges from the pond.

### Cleanup and Abatement Order, Mr. Ken Bareilles, on or about THP 1-99-091 MEN

[Staff contact: Holly Lundborg]

Regional Water Board staff conducted five inspections of Rock Creek Road, Mendocino County. These inspections revealed several violations of the prohibitions contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan). Mr. Ken Bareilles, a licensed timber operator (LTO) did not adequately implement the Road Rehabilitation Plan which, combined with the onset of winter rains, led to discharge and threatened discharge of earthen material to Rock Creek, a fish bearing tributary of the South Fork Eel River, from Rock Creek Road. The discharge of approximately 4 yd<sup>3</sup> of earthen material was documented from one site along the road.

Conditions exist at numerous sites along the Rock Creek Road, which threaten to cause the discharge of earthen material into Rock Creek. These conditions include, but are not limited to, surface erosion from

poorly rocked sections of the road, inadequate or lack of properly designed and constructed road drainage and watercourse crossing structures, surface erosion from the near stream rock quarry, and placement of quarry overburden directly above the creek.

The Executive Officer issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order on January 17, 2002, requiring the LTO to submit an Erosion Control Plan (ECP), complete all the work detailed in the approved ECP, and submit a completion report.

### Cleanup and Abatement Order, Former McNamara & Peepe Sawmill, Crescent City

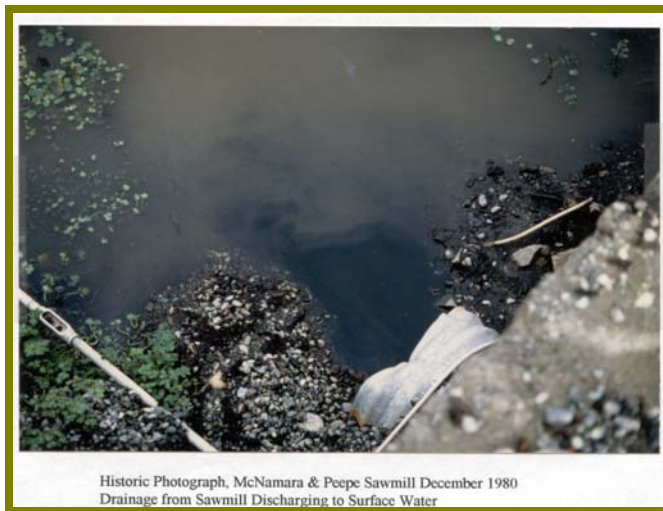
[Staff contact: Lisa Bernard]

The McNamara & Peepe Corporation operated a sawmill in Crescent City from the mid-1940s through December 18, 1981.



## CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13267 LETTER ORDERS

There were five California Water Code section 13267(b) Letter Orders issued during the month of January 2002. The Letter Orders were issued to: Gallo Vineyards, Sonoma County; Laytonville Solid Waste Disposal Site, Mendocino County; Del Rio Woods Summer Dam, Sonoma County; Sebastopol Road Commingled Plume Group, Sonoma County, and Samoa Bridge Site, Humboldt County.



Over the course of sawmill operations, various wood treatment chemicals were applied to cut lumber in the sawmill and planning mill areas, for sap stain control. Wood treatment chemicals including pentachlorophenol and tetrachlorophenol have been detected in ground and surface water at the site. Impurities in the wood treatment chemicals include dioxins, which have been detected in soils, sediments, and fish tissue in the area.

A revised Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued on January 18, 2002, to provide for investigation and cleanup at the site. This abandoned sawmill site is being considered as an alternative location for the construction of a new wastewater treatment facility for the City of Crescent City.

## SPILLS, COMPLAINTS, AND INVESTIGATIONS

There were three spills reported on the Sanitary Sewer Overflow and Spill Data Management System since the last report.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS/ ORDERS**

On January 14, 2002, the Regional Water Board issued Complaint No. R1-2002-0015 for Administrative Civil Liability to Mr. Brian Craig, in the amount of \$30,000, for failure to comply with the California Water Code section 13267(b) orders requiring him to submit a completed site investigation and corrective action report for petroleum and waste discharges on his property located in Blocksburg, Humboldt County.

## **UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLEANUP FUND PROGRAM**

From October 31, 2001, through February 1, 2002, there has been a total of \$1,293,167 in funds issued to tank owners in Region 1 from the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund. There were also five letters of commitment issued during the month of January 2002.

## **CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 CERTIFICATIONS**

There was one Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and one Denial Without Prejudice issued during the month of January 2002.

Information regarding all proposed certifications is available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html>

## **OUTREACH ACTIVITIES/ MISCELLANEOUS**

Regional Water Board staff member Andrew Jensen, Environmental Scientist, made a presentation at this year's World Wetland Day (WWD) on February 2, 2002, highlighting the importance of wetlands and discussing the role the Regional Water Board plays in the protection and regulation of wetland habitat on the

North Coast. February 2<sup>nd</sup> each year is World Wetlands Day, which marks the date of the signing of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian City of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.



(California Vernal Pool, Santa Rosa)

The theme for World Wetlands Day 2002 was "Wetlands: Water, Life, and Culture". The Atascadero Creek and Green Valley Creek Watershed Council, a local Sonoma County Watershed Group, organized a celebration of our wetlands to highlight the importance of wetland areas in our watersheds.



(Wetland and Canadian Geese, Skylane Boulevard, Santa Rosa)

The program included several guest speakers for a seminar series, and a fieldtrip to local wetlands in the Sebastopol area.

Since 1997, WWDs have been organized around the world, with such themes as the importance of water to life and of wetlands to the supply of water and, in 1999, on "People and Wetlands: the Vital Link".

Each year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits, and the Ramsar Convention in particular. From 1997 to 2001, there have been reports from over 60 countries involved in WWD activities that have included lectures and seminars, nature walks, children's art contests, community clean-up days, radio and television interviews, and to launch new wetland policies.

## **PUBLIC FILE REVIEW**

From December 1, 2001, through January 1, 2002, two written requests were made for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, a total of 18 people came into the office and requested file review during the month of January 2002.

## **STAFF HIRING**

There were no hires during the month of January 2002.

## **JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WATER BOARD MEETINGS**

The Regional Water Board meeting for January was held in Santa Rosa. The February Board meeting will be held in Eureka on February 28, 2002. There will also be a workshop held in Eureka on February 27, 2002.

a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our web-site at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov>.